

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

October 14, 2008

Open Session

Mrs. Morris called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. School Committee members present:

Anthony Carcieri, Stephen DeCastro, Robert Faria, Steven Santos, Mildred Morris. Also present: Dr. Mario Cirillo, Superintendent of Schools, Edward Daft, Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Sara Rapport, Esq.

A motion was made by Mr. Faria to move to executive session in accordance with RI General Laws, Section 42-46-5 (a) (1) Personnel, (a) (2) Collective Bargaining/Litigation, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

The School Committee returned to open session; a motion was made by Mr. Carcieri to return to open session and to seal the minutes of the executive session, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

Mrs. Morris reported that a vote had been taken in executive session

to approve the Superintendent's rate of pay, per diem based on a salary of \$140,000, with no benefits until the contract is finalized. Motion by Mr. Carcieri, seconded by Mr. Santos. All voted aye.

Record of Previous Meetings ✓ None

Student Teacher Recognition ✓ A student at East Providence High School, Andrew Hill, was nominated by his advisor, Mr. Richard Silva, for appointment to the National College Board, representing New England to voice concerns of students in RI. Andrew was congratulated and presented with a certificate.

Pamela Thacker of the Science Department at Martin Middle School was recognized for bringing the FMA Live program to the school; the program is sponsored by NASA and Honeywell at no cost to teach physics and science to middle school students. Ms. Thacker was congratulated and presented with a certificate.

Mrs. Morris reported on grants and awards as follows:

„X A legislative grant from Rep. Helio Melo will provide dresses for the girls chorus and stage backdrops at Martin Middle School

„X Riverside Middle School Band will be the recipient of a legislative grant from Senator Paul Moura

„X Kent Heights School received \$3000 from Bob's Stores for

Cultural Arts

Mrs. Morris reported that a public forum sponsored by RIDE will be held at East Providence High School Auditorium on October 23, 2008 from 4-6PM; residents from the East Bay are being asked to provide input to the Regents Search Committee for the selection of a new Commissioner of Education for RI. Mrs. Morris thanked everyone who participated this year in the annual Townie Parade, which she hopes will continue to get bigger and better.

Mrs. Morris requested that Item K on the agenda, Alumni Association ,be moved up on the agenda. Mr. John Butler presented the by-laws of the Alumni Association; work was completed over the summer at the request of the School Department to make the organization credible and able to support East Providence High School. The purpose of the organization is to cultivate Townie Pride and hopefully generate benefits to the school. Mr. Butler expressed responsibility and duty to his Alma Mater and asked all who have graduated to support the organization. Mr. Santos expressed appreciation for the work which was completed and hopes this will turn the organization into what the School Committee envisions it to be. Mr. DeCastro asked about types of fundraising. Mr. Butler explained there will be a small fee to join; and a breakfast will be held to cultivate the bond of the alumni. An original copy was provided for the record. Mrs. Morris asked for people to come out to the meetings. Dr. Cirillo related that his first Townie parade was amazing testimony to the

commitment to the school system; he offered congratulations and support to Mr. Butler for moving the group forward.

School Committee Comments ¡V None

Sub-Committee Reports ¡V Mr. Carcieri reported that the negotiating sub-committee began collective bargaining the middle of August but has not been able to agree on ground rules. A basic stumbling block has been that the School Committee wanted to negotiate in open session so taxpayers can see what both sides are asking for, but the union prefers it to be private because it could be a media circus. Four to five weeks have passed with no resolution; mediation will start next week (six sessions through the end of the month) and interest arbitration will start in November; we are not coming together on anything now. Mr. Barham commented that the goal is to settle in mediation.

Personnel Recommendations ¡V Mr. Barham, Director of Human Resources, presented the following personnel items:

APPOINTMENTS

Allison Hunt Science Teacher, MMS

Stefanie Luft Speech/Language Pathologist, PPS

Kathleen Martin Early Childhood Special Ed, Meadowcrest

Robert Perry Newspaper Advisor, EPHS

Chrystine Caffrey DECA Advisor, CTC

Patricia Dionne DECA Advisor, CTC

John Wolf Student Liaison, EPHS

Daniel Cabral Asst. Coach, Softball, EPHS (1 year only)

Jose Silva Head Coach, Girls' Soccer, MMS

Laurie Tubman Cheerleading Coach, RMS

Soccer & Basketball

Elaine Allen Head Teacher, Waddington

Cathy Cabral Testing Coordinator, Silver Spring

Erica Ellinwood Tech Advisor, Silver Spring

Judith Hurley Safety Patrol Coordinator, Oldham

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

BRIGHT HORIZONS

OLDHAM

Mary Gallagher/Pamela Watson Administrator

Donna Fernandes Grade 2

Joan Thomas Grade 3

Mary Anne Duvall Grade 5

ORLO

Cheryl Gibbs Administrator

Karen Panzarella Grade 2

Christina Valliere Grade 3

Pat Ferreira Grade 5

KENT HEIGHTS

Catherine Allen Grade 3

Maureen Allen Grade 4

Karen Oliveira Grade 5

HENNESSEY

Phil McCormick Administrator & Grade 2

Katelyn Dorney Grade 3

Keri Calabro Grade 4

Evan Cardullo Grade 5

WHITEKNACT

Paula Fillion Administrator

Kim Paiva Grade 2

Amy Souza Grade 3

Lisa Ashe Grade 4

Teri George Grade 5

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0

RETIREMENTS

Diane Rodericks (22 yrs) Benefits Coordinator, Administration
Effective December 29, 2008

Edwin Souza, Jr. (23 yrs) Maintenance
Effective September 11, 2008

Dorothy Ruggieri (11 yrs) Bus Assistant
Effective October 31, 2008

Nancy MacDonald (19 yrs) Teacher Assistant, RMS
Effective September 1, 2008

Nancy Mello (19 yrs) Bus Assistant
Effective February 6, 2009

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

RESIGNATIONS

Keri Larson Reading Specialist, EPHS

Robert Hanlon Testing Coordinator, RMS

Nicholas Reed Assistant Band Director, EPHS

Michael Solitro Coach, Baseball, MMS

Richard Small Coach, Boys' Track, RMS

Greg McCarthy Coach, Girls' Basketball, RMS

Greg McCarthy Coach, Girls' Track, RMS

Jesse Bartlett Custodian, Administration Bldg.

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Heidi Correiro Occupational Therapist

Approx. November 12, 2008

Motion: Mr. Santos/Second: Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

RECALLS

Arlene Boyd Secretary, Meadowcrest

Maryanne O'Rourke Secretary, Whiteknact

Donna DelleFemine Secretary, Hennessey

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

Mr. DeCastro raised an issue regarding the fact that he is related to one individual whose name is on the docket he is voting on. Mr. Barham explained that the issue covered under the nepotism policy is for new employees and that the new policy would not apply in this instance.

Financial Report- Mr. Jerome Baron, Director of Administration and Finance advised that we have \$3.2 million dollars of bills we cannot pay and that some vendors are now on COD; one institution contacted RI Department of Education regarding delinquencies and he has received other calls as well. Mr. DeCastro asked about the over 90 day invoices and the level of concern regarding three major vendors. Discussion about when the School Committee votes to approve the bill list, the checks are processed after that; this is the amount of money that is allowed by the City.

Mr. Baron, when asked about a possible solution, responded that it would probably be a supplement, the checking account is run out of City Hall. Mr. DeCastro asked what happens if vendors do not provide services, what then. Dr. Cirillo said this would involve our neediest kids and we would be in a lot of trouble.

Mr. DeCastro mentioned that Whiteknact has not received a delivery of math books and thought the School Committee should have been

notified. Dr. Cirillo said there was a problem, but it has been corrected. Mrs. Morris said she did discuss this with the Superintendent. Mr. Faria agreed. Mr. DeCastro asked how do we prioritize who gets paid. Mr. Baron has been working cooperatively with the City Finance Director to address these issues. Mr. DeCastro was concerned with the payment to the City and to the attorney; we are asking everyone to wait for their money, maybe we could do a better job with the list of priorities. Mr. Baron said discussions are on going and he is trying to address these concerns.

Mr. Baron explained that the Superintendent has been meeting with administrative staff to try to modify some items. On the audit report from one year ago, the city was reserving the deficit of \$1.2 and he does not think that deficit should be in there; the next document the School Committee receives should show this. Mr. DeCastro asked about the end date of encumbrances on the expenditure report. Mr. Baron explained that encumbrances are through October 14th; there is another payroll this fiscal year, therefore the payroll will be slightly over spent. Mr. DeCastro asked if the number for retiree claims was an estimate. Mr. Baron explained that city converted during the middle of the fiscal year and all this has to be sorted out with two different account titles. This is only one of the problems encountered and we have to live with this until it is corrected. Discussion took place regarding the operating budget. Mr. Baron explained the change in account systems; expenditure accounts are not reflective; there was a change in mid -stream when the school department

entered into a contract and became a Beta site. Mr. Faria talked about his understanding regarding the pilot program which was implemented. The person who became the expert on the chart of accounts left; this is what we are dealing with now. Mr. Baron explained the problems with the system now. Mr. Faria said this was supposedly a no cost pilot program. Mr. Baron explained the problems with the system and the vendor, who should have run parallel systems; we converted from a position of weakness. Mr. Faria said the incentive was the pilot program and that our finance person would be immersed in this and train others. Mr. Carcieri asked what happened after that individual left. Mr. Baron explained the problems with the chart of accounts. In response to Mr. Carcieri's questions about the cost of the software and if the system was far superior to what we had before, Mr. Baron said it is not working consistently and there was not sufficient training or cross training along with the fact that we were the first site to get the software. He would never have committed to be a Beta site on software and would not want to be the first. Mr. Carcieri asked if we are too far in to go back; Mr. Baron responded that with what we owe we cannot do much at this point.

Mr. DeCastro asked to look at the contract; the company should be asked to bring in training. Mr. Baron had a meeting and they agreed to provide one day of support and training. We have a system with problems and not much can be done about it. Mr. De Castro said he did not recall talking about this; if the vendor does not perform, what

is our legal recourse to get them to do training, make it work, or get a refund. Mr. Santos recalled nothing about a pioneer system; this was presented as a state program in order to implement a uniform chart of accounts across the state. Dr. Cirillo said there was an incentive to do this; we need the software company to implement the program. Mr. Carcieri asked if it was presented to other school systems. Mr. Faria remembers this very differently and nothing was mentioned about beta software. Mr. Carcieri said the presentation was made by one person with no legal review. Mr. Daft had the same understanding of this that others were going with the same program.. Dr. Cirillo said the software has made it difficult to communicate with our other system.

Home School Requests ¡V Mr. Rodericks presented the requests for home schooling. A motion was made by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

2008 NECAP Science Presentation ¡V Mr. Edward Daft presented the 2008 Science NECAP results. District and school results were disappointing as they fell below the state average. However, most students did score at the nearly proficient level and efforts are being made to address science instruction and assessment. Principals have been directed to review individual student/school results and report any issues or concerns regarding public data. RIDE reporting meetings will be announced later this month.

Kim Laliberte, Science Department Chair at East Providence High School, spoke regarding a joint partnership with the Brown University Neuroscience department. The ARISE (Advancing RI Science Education) Collaboratory is a professional development project for teachers to train in innovative science content and pedagogical approaches to challenge teaching and learning. Throughout the academic year, teachers have access to mobile laboratory equipment, a public website, and four advisors/coaches from the Brown graduate staff who will interact with students to conduct independent research projects in science. The program was met with excitement and enthusiasm and is off to a great start.

Surplus of Buildings ¶ A motion was made by Mr. Faria to table this item, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

New Business

Mr. DeCastro requested that the School Committee take a salary reduction after December 1st for the next two years; after discussion, Mr. DeCastro made a motion to reduce salaries 50% effective 12/1; there was no second to the motion.

Mr. DeCastro asked to review School Committee decisions:

„X A potential issue with the nepotism policy as he believes the School Committee hired someone related to an administrator , which violated that policy.

„X Change in legal services; with a budget crunch, we are paying more than the \$125 rate which was paid previously. He does not know what the rate is now, but an invoice was received for \$38,000 and he noticed we are going to pay that bill while others are waiting.

„X The School Committee could not agree on a contract for the Superintendent and he is still being paid as an interim; he wants the new School Committee to pay attention to that.

„X The Finance Director was hired to a position that he believes does not exist; that position was to be consolidated and there was no salary advertised. He wants the public to know that this person will be the second highest paid administrator and the School Committee could not agree on a contract.

„X The School Committee sent the budget to the City Council and did not even cut out one dollar.

Motion by Mr. Carcieri to accept the School Committee review, seconded Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

Mrs. Morris mentioned that the former finance person was to receive a title change with no raise; he decided to leave and the new person is at \$110,000.

Payment of Bills

Mr. DeCastro wants to exclude some bills; he wants to see the legal bills. Discussion took place about the bill list and if checks are being

issued before the bill list is approved. Mr. Santos said the School Committee makes a commitment to vendors and we need to pay bills; these are expenses incurred by the School Department. Mr. Carcieri felt that the bills should not be picked apart; they were reviewed by the Superintendent and Finance Director.

Mr. DeCastro asked why the legal bills are not on the aging list since everyone else has to wait why is there preference. He believes the School Committee should review them because of the hourly rate; he wants to know the hourly rate. Mrs. Morris asked to receive copies.

Local Operating Bill List:

Warrant #000858 10/8/08 \$ 1,796,918.29

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mr. Santos. Vote 4-1 (Mr. DeCastro voted nay)

Federal Bill List:

Warrant #000859 10/9/08 \$ 62,303.42

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mr. Santos. Vote 4-1 (Mr. DeCastro voted nay)

Discussion: Mr. DeCastro asked about a hotel bill on the bill list which was part of a History Grant. Mr. Baron explained that the check list is sent to City Hall after School Committee approval. Mr. Carcieri asked Mr. Baron to review his credentials and what other financial crises he has been involved in. Mr. Baron was involved in a financial crisis in Waterbury Ct, Providence, RI and Cranston, RI. Mr. DeCastro said he has a problem with the process, not Mr. Baron.

Mr. Carcieri wants to see positive change in the systems so they will be set up like never before; there will be a lot of discomfort now, but let everyone have a chance to get rolling; he knows the city will benefit.

Mr. Santos was concerned about a comment made at a City Council meeting which unfairly characterized our high school students. The issue pertained to the granting of a license; he found the comments troubling and thought it was grossly unfair to students.

Public Comment

Mr. Geratis expressed concern about problems with unions lobbying the School Committee and the fact that the School Committee becomes overly dependent on unions for votes; that's why overrun with deficits

Mr. Anthony Shepard, 40 Rosemere Drive asked about busing to Massachusetts schools. Mr. Linneman, Transportation Supervisor explained that East Providence is responsible for transportation of students to outside placements. Mr. Shepard also had a question about the school budget not exceeding the cap, it is illegal to accept the bill and there is nothing in the budget for school kids.

Mr. Faria commented that the School Committee is aggressively mediating to get in line with what we can afford; there are laws on both sides; it is a catch 22 moving money from one side to the other. Last year we did the same thing moving numbers on tuitions, benefits and special education, which were assumptive cuts. Mr. Carcieri said the budget presented is the real deal and the deficit is from past year's assumptive cuts; we are recovering past practices from other years. Mr. DeCastro complained that the budget was submitted with no reductions in health care, buybacks, etc. Mr. Carcieri asked if it is appropriate to book numbers that are not there. Mr. Baron stated that the deficits should have been parenthetical requests for money for three years; reductions were not achieved in health care, special education, etc.

Bob Cusack, 150 Greenwood Avenue, commented regarding litigation; last year Mr. DeCastro made pretend cuts; there was a lower budget number but the money was spent; these were fanciful numbers. Again this year numbers were not realistic. The City Council is up against challenges with the economy, tax revenue, etc.

and he would like real numbers out of the School Department for once. He is happy that Mr. Baron is here and that new lawyers represent.

Mr. Cusack will be pleased to do his duty to the best of his ability with limited finances, but he wants the truth. There is a proposal to have a joint meeting and he feels it makes sense to meet to talk about real numbers; last year he had no idea about the fanciful numbers; he will not be fooled again. He is glad the School Committee is dealing with real numbers and he looks forward to a joint meeting. He looks forward to solving this problem.

A motion was made by Mr. Faria to adjourn at 10:35 PM, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Steven Santos, Clerk of the School Committee